

Fundamentalism - “Have you been Saved”

Fundamentalism is a relatively new brand of Protestantism started in America that has attracted a tremendous following, including many fallen away Catholics.

Fundamentalism: Is a Relatively New Theology

- There was no individual founder, nor was there a single event that precipitated its advent. Stems from Luther’s theology of Faith Alone (Sola Fide).
- Fundamentalist’s look at Martin Luther as a hero of Christianity although they do not adhere to all of Luther’s beliefs.
- Typically they don’t think of themselves as “Protestants”. They look negatively on Protestantism because it retains some Catholic traditions
- Followers believe that fundamentalism flourished for three centuries after Christ, but then went underground for twelve hundred years and resurfaced again with the Reformation. They believe the rest of Christianity has fallen into apostasy.
- Until almost 100 years ago, Fundamentalism as we know it was not a separate movement within Protestantism, and the word itself was virtually unknown.
- Denominations which would be called Fundamentalists are: Independent Baptists, Presbyterians, Assembly of God, Pentecostal or members of some other specific sect.
- They have a very negative view of society and most view their own local church members as the only ones who are saved.
- They have a strong belief in the “Rapture” due to their incorrect interpretation of a verse in Thessalonians. They are very much involved with the second coming of Christ and believe that the rapture is very near.
- They are typically very anti-catholic and will typically not converse with Catholics.

- Most consider the Catholic Church to be the “Whore of Babylon” or the church of Satan.
- Some fundamentalist churches even require new catholic converts to burn their Rosaries, Missals, Baptismal Gowns, and First Communion articles.
- What has been particularly surprising is that Catholics seem to constitute a disproportionate share of new recruits.
- They are very offended at the Catholic beliefs concerning Mary.
- They think of their faith as only between Jesus and them. There is no heavenly family which includes Mary or the Saints.

The history of Fundamentalism may be viewed as having three main phases.

1st Phase: From the 1890s to the Scopes "Monkey Trial" of 1925. In this period, Fundamentalism emerged as a reaction to liberalizing trends in American Protestantism.

2nd Phase: Fundamentalism passed from public view, but never actually disappeared or even lost ground.

3rd and Final Stage: Fundamentalism came to the nation’s attention again around 1970, and it has enjoyed considerable growth.

The issues for Fundamentals were:

1. The Social Gospel, a liberalizing and secularizing trend within Protestantism that tried to weaken the Christian message, making it a merely social and political agenda;
 2. The embrace of Darwinism, which seemed to call into question the reliability of Scripture; and the higher criticism of the Bible that originated in Germany.
- To meet the challenge presented by these developments, early Fundamentalist leaders united around several basic principles, but it

was not until the publication of a series of book volumes called “The Fundamentals” that the movement received its name.

- There were 64 contributors, including Episcopalian bishops, Presbyterian ministers, Methodist evangelists, and even an Egyptologist.
- Three million copies of the series were distributed.

The fundamental doctrines identified in the series can be reduced to five:

1. The inspiration and what the writers call infallibility of Scripture

- Fundamentalists’ attitude toward the Bible is the keystone of their faith.

2. The deity of Christ (including his virgin birth)

- Keep in mind, though, that when Fundamentalists speak of Christ’s birth from a virgin, they mean that Mary was a virgin only until his birth. Their common understanding is that Mary later had other children, citing the scriptural passages that refer to Christ’s "brethren."

3. The substitutionary atonement of his death

- He not only took on our sins, he received the penalty that would have been ours. He was actually punished by the Father in our stead.

4. His literal resurrection from the dead

- On the matter of the resurrection, Fundamentalists do not differ from orthodox Catholics. They believe that Christ rose physically from the dead, not just spiritually.

5. His literal return at the Second Coming

- The most disputed topic, among Fundamentalists themselves, concerns the fifth belief listed in The Fundamentals, the Second

Coming. There is unanimous agreement that Christ will physically return to Earth, but the exact date has been disputed. Some say it will be before the millennium, a thousand-year golden age with Christ physically reigning on earth. Others say it will be after the millennium. Others say that the millennium is Christ's heavenly reign and that there will be no golden age on earth before the last judgment. Some Fundamentalists also believe in the rapture, the bodily taking into heaven of true believers before the tribulation or time of trouble that precedes the millennium. Others find no scriptural basis for such a belief.

The five (or six) main doctrines discussed in the book volumes gave Fundamentalism its name, however today Fundamentalism has a different focus. → Personal Salvation!

Distinguishing Fundamental Beliefs:

1. Reliance on the Bible to the complete exclusion of any authority exercised by the Church.
2. The second is their insistence on a faith in Christ as one's personal Lord and Savior.

This is unmodified Christian individualism, which believes that an individual is saved, without ever considering his relationship to a church, a congregation, or anyone else.

It is a one-to-one relationship with Jesus, with no community, no sacraments, just the individual Christian and his Lord. → They call this a "Personal Relationship" with Jesus.

A fundamentalist knows when he has been saved, down to the hour and minute of his salvation, because his salvation came when he "accepted" Christ. It came like a flash. Not scriptural!

In that instant, many Fundamentalists believe, their salvation is assured. There is now nothing that can undo it. Without that instant, that moment of acceptance, a person would be doomed to eternal hell.

Emphasis on evangelism. If sinners do not undergo the same kind of salvation experience fundamentalists have undergone, they will go to hell.

Fundamentalists perceive a duty to spread their faith—what can be more charitable than to give others a chance for escaping hell?—and they often have been successful. They often ask: "Do you accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?" or "Have you been saved?"

Their success is partly due to their discipline. For all their talk about the Catholic Church being "rule-laden," there are perhaps no Christians who operate in a more regimented manner.

Their non-biblical rules extend not just to religion, but to facets of everyday life. Most people are familiar with their strictures on drinking, gambling, dancing, and smoking.

Fundamentalists also are intensely involved in their local congregations.

Many people returning to the Catholic Church from Fundamentalism complain that as Fundamentalists they had no time or room for themselves; everything centered around the church.

All their friends were members; all their social activities were staged by it. Not to attend Wednesday evening services or one or two services on Sunday, not to participate in the Bible studies and youth groups, not to dress and act like everyone else in the congregation → this meant being ostracized, a silent invitation to conform or to worship elsewhere.

Very few Fundamentalist churches have more than a hundred members.

In reality fundamentalists believe that people are "saved" only if they adhere to their particular beliefs and traditions which vary from church to church.

In the end → Fundamentalist's do not really practice what they preach! If someone has been "saved" all these other things shouldn't affect their salvation or status in their fundamentalist church.

What to do if you are asked "Have you been saved?"

Answer: Yes! I have been saved through Christ's death, through my baptism, and I am continually being saved through God's grace.

- As Catholics we believe that we are saved because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Because of this heaven was opened up!
- We also believe that we are saved by the God's Grace Alone.
- We believe we must continually participate in God's Grace through faith and good works.
- We believe salvation is an ongoing process and that our salvation can be lost through our own free will.
- We believe Jesus instituted a Church to dispense God's Grace through the Seven Sacraments.
- We believe that the stain of original sin is removed through Baptism and that without being baptized we cannot enter Heaven. Baptism is not symbolic it does something!
- We believe Salvation is not a onetime event.
- Recall our creeds!

Scripture verses for the Catholic Position:

"Do you not know that if you yield yourself to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (Rom 6:15-16)

Even St. Paul isn't sure if his salvation: "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (Phil 3: 10-11)

“and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matt 10:22). **Why endure if we have been saved already?**

“The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22) **We cannot judge ourselves as being absolutely saved. Fundamentalists are judging themselves instead of God.**

St. Paul says: Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:26-27) – **Paul would have known whether the early church believed in "once saved always saved" and yet he seems to be worried about his own salvation. This verse contradicts the theology of once saved always saved!**

“If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not deadly.” (1 Jn 5:16-17) **Shows that even though you have been saved you can still sin and that sin can lead to death. Doesn't sound like once saved always saved! This verse also backs up the Catholic belief of venial and mortal sins.**

“He who says "I know him" but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him;” (1 John 2:4) **We must believe the correct truth in order to be saved. Truth is not subjective to our own fallible interpretation.**

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal 5:19-21)

“Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. He who does good is of God; he who does evil has not seen God.” (1John 1:11) **Unless you're saved? Doesn't say this!**

“and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matt 10:22). **Why endure if we have been saved already?**

“There is no partiality with God.” (Rom 2:11) **Unless you're saved? Doesn't say this!**

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil 2:12-13) **Why work out your own salvation if you've been saved?**

“Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off.” (Rom 11:22)

“This charge I commit to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophetic utterances which pointed to you, that inspired by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith, (1 Tim 1:18-19) **Shows that it is possible to fail in your faith.**

“You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” (Matt. 5:27-30) **Sins can lead to death!**

“Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain

in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.” (John 15:1-8) **Jesus states that one must continually remain in him or he will be thrown into the fire. This verse also contradicts faith alone.**

“For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs.” (1 Tim 6:10) **Shows that we can loose our faith.**

“ but my righteous one shall live by faith,and if he shrinks back,my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls.” (Heb 10:38-39)

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.” (Matt 7:1-2) **“Once Saved” believers do not realize it but they are actually casting judgment onto themselves by declaring themselves “saved”.**

“The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22) **We cannot judge ourselves as being absolutely saved. Christ only will judge us!**